DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 376 863 JC 940 579

TITLE	General Education Task Force Final Report to the Academic Plan Steering Committee.
INSTITUTION	George Brown Coll., Toronto (Ontario).
PUB DATE	Mar 94
NOTE	82p.; For the interim report, see ED 365 363.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Education; Community Colleges; *Core Curriculum; *Course Content; *Curriculum Development; Curriculum Guides; Curriculum Research; Foreign Countries; *General Education; Instructional Leadership; Relevance (Education); Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	George Brown College ON

ABSTRACT

A General Education Task Force (GETF) was formally constituted at George Brown College (GBC) in June 1992 as one of four task forces created to develop an academic plan for the college. The charge of the GETF was to develop a philosophy statement on general education, a set of post-secondary general education curriculum guidelines, a general education course approval and review process, and an implementation plan regarding general education for the college. This report represents the deliberations and recommendations of the GETF. Part I provides an introduction to the charge and structure of the Task Force. Part II identifies issues which provide a context for the process of curriculum development, including the mandate of Ontario colleges, college accountability, the impact of the economic recession in Ontario, and equity in the curriculum. Part III presents final curriculum recommendations, including: (1) a general education philosophy statement; (2) curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment principles; (3) three broad content areas of the general education curriculum model (i.e., arts and humanities, social sciences, and science and technologies); (4) criteria for determining appropriate course content in the three content areas; (5) learning outcomes; (6) foundations courses; (7) breadth of content; and (8) inclusion of skills in general education courses. Part IV presents a plan for implementing the general education program, while part V summarizes the recommendations of the Generic Skills Subcommittee. Finally, part VI offers concluding comments on the process of developing a general education curriculum. (MAB)

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ED 376 863

GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE

FINAL REPORT

TO THE

ACADEMIC PLAN

STEERING COMMITTEE

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GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE
MARCH, 1994

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. BACKGROUND

This Report, in conjunction with the previous Interim Report[1], represent the concluding deliberations of the General Education Task Force.

The work of the Task Force emerged as part of our college's decision to develop an Academic Plan to respond to the many changes and challenges facing our educational community as well as to the broad directions for Ontario colleges which emerged from VISION 2000[2], and which are currently being developed by the province's recently established College Standards and Accreditation Council (CSAC).

Regarding general education, the Ministry has mandated that CSAC, through its General Education Council, shall define goals, broad objectives and a framework for broad content areas. The colleges, on the other hand, shall be responsible for "defining specific learning outcomes" as they "develop general education curriculum."[3]

The work of the General Education Task Force and its subcommittees is a recommended approach to operationalizing the development and delivery of general education curriculum in conjunction with generic skills for our College. This approach enables the College

- to develop and deliver a coherent general education curriculum with integrity, vision and respect for the distinctive strengths and traditions of our College;

- to establish an effective organizational structure for developing and delivering general education and generic skills across the College in collaboration with the vocational programs;

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[1] General Education Task Force, Interim Report to the Academic Plan Steering Committee , George Brown College, April, 1993.

[2] Vision 2000: Quality and Opportunity. A Review of the Mandate of Ontario's Colleges. Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities, 1990.

[3] The College Standards and Accreditation Council, General Education In Ontario's Community Colleges. Ontario Council of Regents for Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, Ministry of Colleges and Universities, January, 1994: 1.

- to respond practically to the breadth and depth (i.e., post secondary) requirements that are part of the general education guidelines as well as to other system-wide initiatives related to general education such as articulation, transferability, human resource development and prior learning assessment; and

- to develop a realistic, integrated and comprehensive implementation plan for general education.

This Final Report follows upon the earlier recommendations of the Interim Report. These recommendations were approved, and many, especially those concerning philosophy and implementation, have been acted upon. The implementation recommendations have been clarified and modified as a result of being put into practice. Other work, notably in curriculum and generic skills, was in process at the time of the Interim Report and is now addressed in greater detail and clarity in this document.

The Task Force invites the College to review its recommendations and to consider the overall approach being proposed in the context of the many expectations, issues and conditions currently pertaining to general education.

2. THE GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE

The General Education Task Force was formally constituted in June, 1992 as one of the four Task Forces of the Academic Plan Steering Committee. The mandate of the Task Force was to research, develop and recommend a general education policy for George Brown College in accordance with the guidelines and recommendations of VISION 2000 and CSAC. Specifically, the Task Force undertook to develop

- a philosophy statement on general education
- post-secondary general education curriculum guidelines
- a general education course approval and review process, and
- an implementation plan regarding general education for the college.

In January, 1993, the Academic Steering Committee directed that similar work on generic skills be handled by a Subcommittee of this Task Force in collaboration with representatives from the other Task Forces.

The General Education Task Force established four standing subcommittees to effectively carry out its work (see Diagram 1: General Education Task Force Structure) and adopted a set of working principles to guide the group in its research, deliberations and development of recommendations. (See Appendix A)

The group submitted its Interim Report to the Academic Plan Steering Committee in April, 1993. Given the time constraints under which the Task Force was operating, the focus of the Interim Report was on

- providing an overview of the historical context and educational issues regarding general education;
- developing a philosophy statement; and
- creating an implementation plan for the college.

By contrast, the Interim Report presented only a progress report on the work done to date in the areas of general education curriculum and generic skills.

3. THE TASK FOR FALL, 1993

The Task Force reconstituted itself in the Fall, 1993

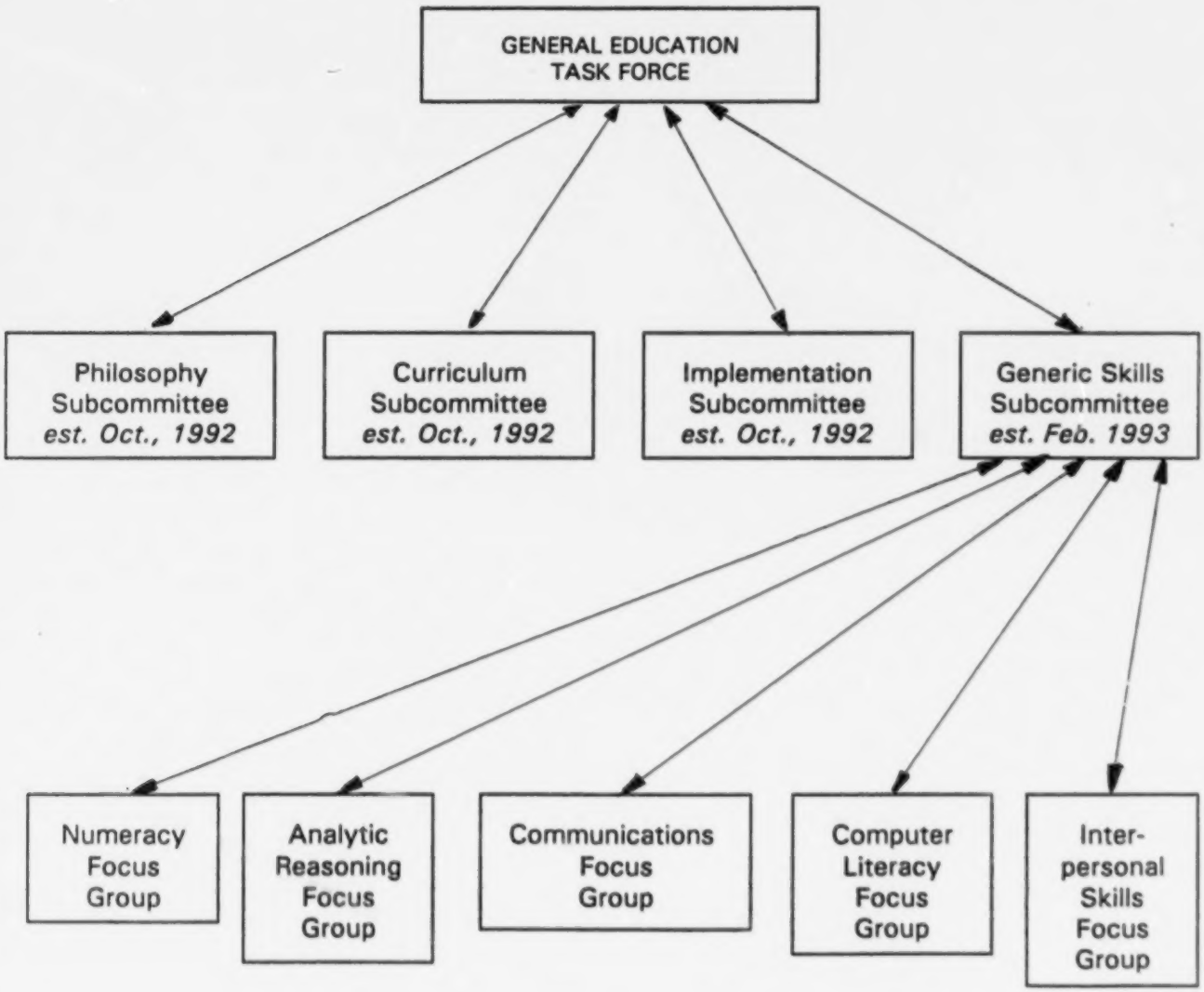
a) to review feedback to the Interim Report and complete its work in the areas of general education curriculum and generic skills; and

b) to serve as a resource in addressing implementation issues that emerged from operationalizing the recommendations made in the Interim Report.

It was agreed that the Task Force would conclude its work by December, 1993, and submit its Final Report to the Academic Plan Steering Committee early in 1994.

DIAGRAM 1:

GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE STRUCTURE


GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE
Philosophy Subcommittee est. Oct., 1992
Curriculum Subcommittee est. Oct., 1992
Implementation Subcommittee est. Oct., 1992
Generic Skills Subcommittee est. Feb. 1993
Numeracy Focus Group
Analytic Reasoning Focus Group
Communications Focus Group
Computer Literacy Focus Group
Inter-personal Skills Focus Group

4. STRUCTURE AND OPERATION FOR FALL, 1993

In order to accomplish its tasks, the Task Force reconstituted the Curriculum and Generic Skills Subcommittees.

4.1 Curriculum Subcommittee

The Task Force directed the Curriculum Subcommittee to address the following four areas:

i) learning outcomes;
ii) overall curriculum models;
iii) pedagogy and assessment methods; and
iv) the foundations course.

4.2 Generic Skills Subcommittee

The Generic Skills Subcommittee had originally been constituted in February, 1993 to address issues, develop curriculum and propose an implementation plan for the five generic skill areas identified by the Ministry--analytic reasoning, communication, computer literacy, interpersonal skills, and mathematics.

Much of the work in this initial phase focused on determining broad exit-level proficiencies and implementation recommendations, and was being carried out by five relatively independent focus groups comprised of individuals with expertise in the specific generic skill area. The Subcommittee Chair served as liaison among them and the Task Force.

The Generic Skills Subcommittee was reconstituted with representation from the General Education Task Force, the five generic skills focus groups, and the Access and Student Services Task Force. It was directed to

i) consolidate and review the goals and general learning standards for the five generic skills areas which the focus groups had developed;

ii) examine the assessment of generic skills;

iii) examine the issue of levels of proficiency in the generic

skill areas desirable for functioning successfully in post secondary college programs;

iv) examine the linkage among generic skill programs in preparatory and post-secondary programs, and referral to preparatory programs and remedial services; and

v) develop an approach to implementing and reviewing a coherent generic skills program at the College.

Since the Generic Skills Subcommittee had been constituted later than the other subcommittees and was operating relatively independently, the Task Force decided it would comment on, rather than approve or modify, the final Generic Skills Report.

4.3 Assisting With Implementation Recommendations

The work of assisting the college with operationalizing the Interim Report's Implementation recommendations rested primarily with the Task Force co-chairs. However, the Task Force was regularly apprised of the status of its original implementation recommendations, and was consulted on issues and questions that arose with the operationalization of the recommendations.

4.4 Manner of Operation

As before, the General Education Task Force conducted its overall operations in an open, democratic and collaborative manner, and members were expected to do necessary background reading and research. The Task Force also continued with its practice of consulting various resource persons both within and outside the college system (See Appendix B and Appendix C); and making presentations on its evolving work to the college community as well as to other colleges and groups (See Appendix D).

The Task Force continued in the belief that its work would need to be highly "process" as well as product oriented, requiring time for research, consultation, reflection, group discussion and consensus building. It also sought to maintain the integrity of this process within the pressures of time constraints and resource limitations.

5. THE FORCE

5.1 General Education Task Force

Most of the original members of the Task Force participated in the final phase. However there were some changes: some could not participate as actively as before, or at all, due to scheduling conflicts or other commitments during the semester, while other interested individuals requested to join. The following college members constituted the Task Force from September to December, 1993.

Bob Banks, Technician, Math and Science
Anne Carr, Coordinator, Business Administration
Karen Chandler, Faculty, Early Childhood Education
Helen Colman, Faculty, Math and Science
Fran Dungey, Human Resources
Dorothy Ellis, Chair, Hospitality
Bruno Fullone, Faculty, Math and Science
Marilyn Grant, Faculty, Nursing
Maureen Hynes, Coordinator, Access and School of Labour
Kay Kazuba, Faculty, Fashion
Fred Knittel, Faculty, Fashion Technology
Louise Kruithof, Chair, Architectural Engineering
Ed Ksenych, Coordinator, Liberal Studies (Task Force co-chair)
Peter Lovrick, Faculty, English & Liberal Studies
Bob Luker, Faculty, Community Worker
Marcia Pulleybank, Library Services
Marianne Taylor, Faculty, English & Liberal Studies
and College Council Past Chair (Task Force co-chair)
Gary Waters, Faculty, Science and Technology
Hilde Zimmer, Coordinator, Women in Trades and Technology

5.2 Fall 1993 Generic Skills Subcommittee

As mentioned earlier, much of the work carried out by the Subcommittee from February to June, 1993 had been handled by five relatively independent focus groups with the Subcommittee Chair coordinating their efforts. The newly reconstituted Generic Skills Subcommittee was a much smaller group with representatives from the General Education Task Force, the five generic skills focus groups, and the Access and Student Task Force.

Al Budzin, Chair, Access
Barabara Dyce, Faculty, Access
Bruno Fullone, Coordinator, Math and Science
Doug Jull, Coordinator, English as a Second Language
William Juranic, Faculty, Science and Technology
Ed Ksenych, Faculty, Liberal Studies
Peter Lovrick, Faculty, English & Liberal Studies (Subcommittee Chair)
Hank Lee, Faculty, Access
John Luckman, Faculty, English & Liberal Studies
Nancy Newgren, Faculty, English & Liberal Studies

II. FURTHER EDUCATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

1. INTRODUCTION

In its Interim Report, the General Education Task Force noted that its work had been taking place within an historical, educational and socio-economic context, and identified a number of important issues. The Task Force's further examination of curriculum development and the operationalization of its implementation proposals have brought a number of additional issues to its attention.

The following overview identifies and/or raises further issues encountered in the process of curriculum development and implementation, and is intended to complement the historical context and issues identified in the Interim Report.

2. THE MANDATE OF ONTARIO COLLEGES

A key issue encountered in implementing the requirement of one discrete general education course per semester, beginning September, 1994 has been conflicting views over the colleges' mandate.

Re-examining and renewing the mandate of Ontario colleges was at the heart of the VISION 2000 endeavour. It was an important element behind the development of the province's College Standards and Accreditation Council (CSAC), as well as the directive to give increased attention to generic skills and general education in post-secondary college programs.

As stated in VISION 2000's Preamble to the Mandate,

> [e]ducation has an essential role to play in the development of a world which is peaceful, environmentally sound, equitable and economically viable. Education should help to balance individual and community needs and foster personal initiative and cooperation within human relationships based on mutual respect.[4]

In the renewed mandate VISION 2000 emphasized the importance of providing a high quality education which prepares one for a career,

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[4] Vision 2000: Quality and Opportunity. A Review of the Mandate of Ontario's Colleges. Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities, 1990: 27.

promotes personal growth and responsible participation in society, and enhances opportunities and choice. Nevertheless, there continues to be a widespread perception within the college system that the sole mandate of community colleges is to provide vocational education.

The disparity between the renewed mandate and this perception has contributed to confusion, misunderstanding and antagonism regarding the nature and role of general education within colleges. This perception is often manifested in the following views:

- general education is intruding upon real college education;
- its nature and purpose fall into the "nice to know rather than need to know" categories often used in assessing vocational curriculum content;
- that general education in colleges are broad transferable skills such as communicating, computer literacy, or arithmetic calculations (i.e., generic skills);
- general knowledge for college programs is basically broad vocationally applied knowledge such as how to manage small businesses, time management strategies, etc.; or
- general education courses are any and all vocationally-applied courses that are not a required part of one's particular vocational program.[5]

Given the widespread perception of colleges as solely concerned with vocational education, the implementation of general education has prompted an increasing need to revisit and confirm the mandate of the colleges. A significant effort to assist the colleges in clarifying the nature and intent of general education has been made by CSAC's General Education Council. In the introduction to its guidelines for implementation, the Council underscores the important "societal role of general education" described in VISION 2000:

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[5] Some of these views are represented, for example, in the submission of the Instruction Programs Coordinating Committee to the General Education Council: Annual Education Report-IPCC, Instruction Programs Coordinating Committee, Ontario College of Applied Arts and Technology,January 3, 1994.

> "The communications revolution has expanded the horizons of citizenship so that people can and should feel party of local, national and international debates on issues that affect them, their families and their futures--issues such as poverty, the environment, the Canadian constitution or political change in other parts of the world. To participate actively, they should be aware of the background and context of current events and issues. Helping people to be good citizens, as well as productive workers with marketable skills, should be part of the educational experience at a college".[6]

Nevertheless, there is a growing need for CSAC itself to explicitly clarify that a balanced education, of which general education is a part, has been mandated within the colleges.

3. ACCOUNTABILITY OF COLLEGES

A second set of issues encountered in developing and implementing general education curriculum has centered on accountability. More accurately, the concern with accountability is comprised of two distinct, though related, issues. First, to whom are the colleges accountable? And second, how can we ensure colleges are using their resources efficiently to educate and train students?

3.1 To Whom Are Colleges Accountable?

Although the colleges exist as institutions accountable to the public and the students who fund them, it has been a longstanding practice within Ontario's college system to discuss, develop and assess curriculum in terms of employers' needs, opinions and interests. This practice not only reflects the widespread perception of the colleges' mandate as vocational education discussed earlier, it also grants employers the principal voice in determining what vocational education--as well as other components of college education--ought to be.

While it is important to recognize the significant role that business and industry play in our communities and the practical need of preparing our students for employment in specific occupational areas, this practice

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[6] CSAC, General Education In Ontario's Community Colleges, op. cit: 1.

omits or downplays the many other social, economic, cultural and political sectors of the community.
Treating colleges as solely, or primarily, accountable to business and industry also has implications for what will be perceived as the nature and the relevance, or irrelevance, of general education and generic skills within the colleges.

On the one hand, business, industry and labour together strongly supported increasing general education and generic skills within college programs in the many background studies done for the VISION 2000 report. On the other hand, the Task Force has often been told by groups within the College that support from business, industry and labour for increased general education came from those involved in senior administrative positions who were concerned with long term patterns of employment, human resource development and broad restructuring. By contrast, program advisory committees, usually the major contact a college program has with business and industry, are composed primarily of business and industry representatives who are engaged with finding solutions to the immediate problems of hiring employable graduates or supervising work in the specific occupation, and often do not see the relevance of general education.[7]

If so, one consequence of having colleges primarily accountable to employers is that one level of one sector of the community is usually highly overrepresented on college advisory committees, and accorded a high level of influence over curriculum. As a result, it may be important to revisit the purpose and constitution of advisory committees to ensure they are representative of the diverse interests and sectors that constitute our communities and are cognizant of the College's mandate to provide a balanced education.

3.2 How Do We Ensure Colleges Are Fiscally and Educationally Responsible?

A second dimension of accountability is related to the increasing financial difficulties facing private and public institutions over the last decade. Colleges are expected to demonstrate publicly that they are operating

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[7] Although this opinion is frequently expressed,it is not clear from the VISION 2000 research papers that "front line" managers were, in fact, excluded from the groups consulted by the study teams. See Audrey Gill, Role fo the Colleges in the Changing Economy: Report on Consultations, Colleges and the Changing Economy: Background Paper, Study Team Two, Submitted to the VISION 2000 Steering Committee, 1989.

efficiently and achieving their educational purpose. This, along with recent pressures to "do more with less", has resulted in increasing emphasis on the concrete and quantifiable aspects of education as well as on applying current managerial strategies in classrooms and college operations.

The trends of concretizing, quantifying and closely supervising have had implications in almost all areas of college activity. With regard to curriculum they have resulted in a renewed interest in the "basics"[8], in competency-based models of learning[9], in measurable outcomes and objectives[10], in a preoccupation with instructional techniques[11], and in the application of business and management strategies, such as Total Quality Management, to curriculum development and pedagogy.[12]

The intention of such initiatives may be to promote closer attention to what colleges are doing and how they are doing it in a manner that is publicly verifiable and serves students' interests. However, each initiative also carries with it a number of largely unexamined implications regarding education, and questions about their desirability for, and compatibility with, the nature and purpose of general education.

One very pertinent example for Ontario colleges is learning outcomes. As the College Standards and Accreditation Council has stated:

> "The central component linking . . . [the introduction of system-wide program standards and accreditation, as well as system-wide general education and generic skills requirements] . . . is the articulation of standards of achievement through learning outcomes."[13]

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[8] J.G. Gaff, New Life for the College Curriculum, Jossey-Bass, 1991: 38-41.

[9] Nancy S. Jackson, "Wolves in Charge of the Chicken Coop Competence as Good Management" in Jacob Muller (ed), Education for Work, Education as Work: Canada's Changing Community Colleges. Garamond Press, 1990: 113-124.

[10] CSAC, Guideline to the Development of Standards of Achievement Through Learning Outcomes. Ontario Council of Regents for Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, January, 1994
Andrew Nikiforuk, "Outcomes-Cased education fever is contagious" Globe and Mail, Feb. 25, 1994;
Georgina Loacher, "Revitalizing the Academic Disciplines by Clarifying Outcomes" New Directions for Experimental Learning.

[11] See, for example, the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development's Innovation Abstracts. University of Texas at Austin distributed throughout member colleges in North America.

[12] K. Patricia Cross, "Involving Faculty in TQM" AACC Journal, February/March, 1993: 15-20.

[13] CSAC, Guideline to the Development of Standards of Achievement Through Learning Outcomes, Ontario Council of Regents for Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, January, 1994: 1.

Outcomes represent a strategy for "accountability through quality" to communities, government and, of course, students.

There is little in contemporary education that is not done in the name of the student (e.g., student-centred education, student success, empowering students, etc.) Yet, it is not clear how this currently proposed practice of formulating curriculum in terms of measurable outcomes serves students rather than institutionalizing external control by other groups over curriculum and the educational process. Outcomes, as they are currently formulated by CSAC, essentially stipulate what is worthwhile to learn and what learning is while relieving the students from any real responsibility for their education beyond dutifully fulfilling pre-established external expectations.

Although the concern with accountability is understandable, from the standpoint of general education it is difficult to see how such an approach "balance[s] individual and community needs, and foster[s] personal initiative and co-operation within human relationships based on mutual respect," as specified in VISION 2000's Preamble to the Mandate of the colleges. In addition, the overall position on outcomes appears to be moving contrary to an emphasis on inquiry and the educational experience within curriculum, and an accompanying interest in process rather than product, which have been emerging within the field of education.[14]

3.3. Educational Warranties

Both of the concerns with accountability discussed above culminate in the recent move to have colleges provide "warranties" or "guarantees" to employers concerning the training of their graduates. The practice has been tried in Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia, and is being introduced in Ontario by Durham College.

The initiative is presented as a marketable effort to be fiscally responsible to government and dutifully fulfilling the immediate expectations of the industries and businesses that hire college graduates. However, there are four problems with the initiative:

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[14] E.O. Bevis, "All in all, it was a pretty good funeral" Teacher Talk, March 1993, Vol 32, No 3: 101-105; J.D. Clamdinin and F.M. Connelly, "Forms of Curriculum Inquiry", prepared for The International Encyclopedia of Education, (2nd Ed.), Oxford, 1993. N. Carr and S. Kemmis, Becoming Critical: Knowing Through Action Research, Deakin University Press, 1986.

- it represents the unabashed commodification[15] of education and the student;
- it undermines the legitimate accountability process represented by CSAC;
- it requires the expenditures of public monies based on the subjective judgement of the employer, not the student; and
- it represents the abdication by employers to provide very specific on-the-job training.[16]

From this standpoint, rather than exhibiting resourcefulness in the face of fiscal difficulties, the commodification of education represents the moral bankruptcy of colleges in addressing such fiscal difficulties.

4. THE ECONOMIC REALITY OF RESTRAINT AND CUTBACKS

Implementing general education has brought the colleges directly up against the ongoing fiscal difficulties that have been confronting public institutions during the economic recession. The current problem facing colleges is not only to adjust what they have been doing to accommodate budgetary restraints and a contracting economic environment, but also to undertake restructuring and many new initiatives in areas such as system-wide vocational standards, prior learning assessment, articulation, improved access, alternative educational delivery modes as well as general education and generic skills.

With regard to general education, the government has required that one discrete course per semester beginning September, 1994 be introduced without additional funding. The rationale for this decision was research which indicated that, on average, general education as measured by the early CSAC Discussion Paper definition constituted about 12.4% of the current curricula within the province's college system, or about one course per semester.[17] As such, extra funding would only be needed in the next stage of expanding general education in the colleges a few years hence.

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[15] Claus Offe, Disorganized Capitalism, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1985.

[16] Peter Edwards "Training gives rest of West a trading edge," Toronto Star, January 28, 1990.

[17] Natalie Sorenson (researcher and writer) Policies and Practices in General Education: Ontario CAAT'S Partnership Self Study, Report of a Pilot Project of the CSAC Establishment Board, Ministry of Colleges and Universities, October, 1992.

As we undertake implementation, some shortcomings with the initial proposal have been appearing. For example, the early research had discovered there was a significant difference between the amount of general education in programs that appeared when one used a college's definition compared to the amount that appeared when one used the CSAC Establishment Board's definition (See Diagram 2)[18]. Similarly, the provisional CSAC Establishment Board's definitions used in the research project are also not the same as those finally developed by the General Education Council. As a result, there may be a disparity between the initial CSAC estimates and the proportion that exists using the General Education Council's criteria.

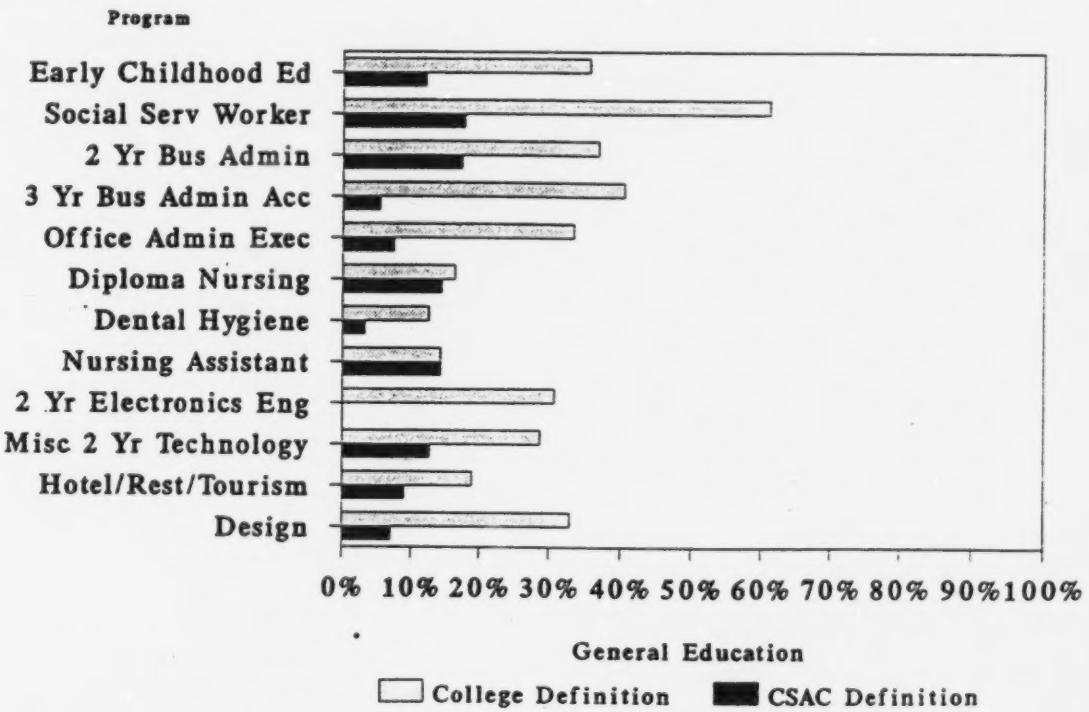

DIAGRAM 2: Percentage of General Education in Selected College Programs as defined by CSAC and by the College, George Brown College.

Moreover, while it may abstractly make sense to shift around or adjust general education courses among programs so that each program reflects the system average, it is practically much more difficult. For example, the following are some of the expenses which are being carried by the

[18] Ibid: 57.

College in implementing a supposedly costfree reorganization of college curricula:

- the cost associated with demanding committee work in formulating philosophy, curriculum and implementation;
- the cost of upgrading the learning resources;
- the cost of assigning faculty to develop and teach new courses;
- the cost involved in organizing and structuring a coherent general education program within a college;
- the cost of professional development to accommodate the attention to general education and generic skills; and
- the costs associated with timetabling, registration, procedures, database changes and calender changes

At the same time, the colleges have not done well collectively in preparing for the implementation of the new requirement. Strictly speaking, colleges have known about the requirement for some time. Yet few initiatives have been taken until the final months. In addition, while there has been some collaboration in order to raise concerns and problems with the requirement, there has been less initiative and leadership demonstrated in networking, pooling resources and sharing ideas to meet the challenge.

Nevertheless, given the current expectation to implement a number of changes simultaneously under which the college system is working, the pressure "to do more for less" often effectively becomes a pressure "to do something for nothing". It is a pressure that is faced by college administrators, who in turn present it to faculty and support staff. And it is a pressure which results in frustration, unreasonable workloads and demoralization which undermine quality work.

There have been some recent proposals made to the government to consider providing colleges in this initial stage with some of the funding promised for the next implementation phase. The government needs to consider such proposals more closely.[19]

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[19] George Brown College, "Details, Details, Details..." A presentation made on behalf of George Brown College to the General Education Council, Dec. 10, 1993.

5. EQUITY IN CURRICULUM

Equity issues have been a part of educational debate and reform for some time, and were briefly addressed in the Interim Report regarding the specific issues of reproducing social inequality and inclusiveness of curriculum. However, college policies and directives that intend to correct social injustice and respect diversity present another related issue for educational philosophy and curriculum.

While programs of equality have generally focused on ensuring similarity of opportunity and process for individuals, equity programs have focused on achieving similarity of outcomes and involve recourse to principles of justice to supplement, or prevail over, existing custom, law or institutional processes to achieve equality of outcomes.

Since equity legislation, by definition, supplements or supercedes existing custom, law, etc., equity considerations run the risk of presenting themselves as exclusively driving curriculum rather than collaborating with other educational interests and concerns--a situation which can easily degenerate into contest, acrimony and misunderstanding.

At the same time, reactive positions to equity initiatives can risk undermining the benefits that come from giving voice to a diversity of viewpoints and traditions that have been historically neglected or suppressed in the open forum which colleges have a responsibility to provide.

There have been a number of stimulating and helpful analytic discussions concerning this issue[20]. However, the practical difficulty facing general education programs is how to best provide an appropriate academic forum for the discussion of this broader public issue, while simultaneously developing provisional curriculum guidelines that sufficiently respect the competing positions.

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[20] Charles Taylor, Multiculturalism and "The Politics of Recognition",Princeton University Press, 1992; G. Nelson, P.A. Treichler and L. Grossberg (ed), Cultural Studies: An Introduction, Routledge, 1992; Andrew Hacker, "Diversity and Its Dangers", New York Review of Books, October 7, 1993: 21-25; Mary-Margaret Simpson and J. Richard Gilliland, "Pressures From Within: Is the Community College Workplace Undermining Diversity?" AACC Journal, Dec/Jan 1993-94: 30-33; and David Rieff, "Multiculturalism's Silent Partner" Harper's Magazine, August, 1993.

III FINAL CURRICULUM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

Completion of work on curriculum, particularly regarding curriculum models and learning outcomes, was one of the main objectives of the Task Force in Fall 1993.

The Curriculum Committee mandate was to make recommendations regarding general education curriculum. The Task Force defined its curriculum tasks around the following key educational issues:

- identifying a curriculum model which is compatible with the educational goals of general education and responsive to the educational history of the college as well as the changing curriculum environment in post-secondary education;

- identifying broad general education content areas that are responsive to the rigour of traditional liberal arts and science disciplines as well as to emerging topic areas and multidisciplinary approaches;

- developing learning outcomes for general education while remaining attentive to the limitations of outcomes-driven education;

- identifying appropriate pedogogical, assessment and delivery methods for general education courses;

- ensuring that students are exposed to a breadth of content in their general education course offerings without undermining the depth required of post-secondary education;

- developing a coherent general education curriculum that combines a required general education foundation course and elective course offerings;

- determining what and how generic skills will be developed in general education curriculum and practice.

Consistent with its working principles, the Task Force agreed that general education curriculum development would be informed by

educational research and discussion on general education. As well as reviewing relevant literature, the Task Force invited resource persons to meet with them to speak to some of the more problematic issues with which it would be grappling, such as the implications of learning outcomes and curriculum models for how general education is understood, organized and delivered.

In developing its recommendations, the Curriculum Committee worked within the framework of the very broad definitions and goals for general education provided by Vision 2000 and the CSAC Establishment Board and the philosophy statement of the General Education Task Force.

In particular, the Task Force curriculum recommendations represent an approach to operationalizing the following CSAC definition of general education in the context of our college's distinctive organizational culture and history.

> "General education appropriate for Ontario colleges can therefore be defined as those postsecondary learning experiences that enable learners to meet more effectively the societal challenges which they face in their community, family and working life. General education in the colleges provides learners with insight into the enduring nature of the issues being addressed, and their particular relevance to today and the future. It is intended to encourage and support continuous learning. It is delivered as discrete courses which are designed to address one or more of the goals and associated broad objectives established for general education."[21]

2. GENERAL EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The following philosophy statement regarding the nature and purpose of general education was recommended by the General Education Task Force in its Interim Report and has been adopted by the College:

George Brown College supports the recommmendations of both Vision 2000 and the CSAC Establishment Board Report regarding the nature, goals and importance of general education and generic skills development in post-secondary college programs.

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[21] CSAC, General Education in Ontario's Community Colleges, op. cit: 4.

Practically, the purpose of general education is to balance the tendency towards occupational specialization and to increase a student's educational, social and economic opportunities in a rapidly changing world. While recognizing the strengths of vocational training, general education involves students in a wider multidisciplinary educational experience.

General education refers to the broad study of subjects and issues which are central to life in modern society. Drawing from the humanities, natural sciences and social sciences, general education encourages students

- to critically reflect upon themselves, their own and other cultures, societies and institutions as well as the interrelationships among them;
- to participate more effectively in the social, political and economic life of their communities;
- to develop their abilities to formulate and achieve personal goals; and
- to understand the continuities of the human experience within a culturally diverse world.

General education courses are intended to increase students awareness of the world in which they live; to give them an understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens in their society; to foster in them the ability to express themselves cogently on a variety of human issues; to facilitate the development and utilization of generic skills; and to engage them in a program of life-long learning.

3. EDUCATIONAL PROCESS: CURRICULUM, PEDAGOGY AND ASSESSSMENT PRINCIPLES

3.1 Introduction

The principles proposed below for building and teaching general education courses and assessing students have as their proper goal a model which will strengthen the "habit of reflection" on problems presented in the broad content areas; the "practical skills" needed for formulating, researching, developing and presenting good responses to those problems; and develop the ability to be a self-directed learner.

3.2 Curriculum Principles

The General Education Task Force recommends that the following curriculum principles guide the development, delivery and review of general education courses in the three broad content areas:

A general education course should

3.2.1 foster inquiry and problem-solving in its pedagogy, content and evaluation;

3.2.2 be collaborative and participatory in its approach to course development and learning, involving students where possible;

3.2.3 balance the development of analytic abilities with a method for encouraging consolidation of the component parts of the course and integration of the course content into an individual's life experience and knowledge;

3.2.4 foster a "critical" understanding of its subject matter by assessing course material in terms of its assumptions and their limitations, cogency, scientific validity, and/or aesthetics, as well as in terms of its psychological, social and moral implications;

3.2.5 examine its subject matter from a variety of perspectives and identify connections with other disciplines, subjects or areas of human endeavor;

3.2.6 be aware of the "hidden curriculum" and ensure that it genuinely reflects the philosophy, pedagogic principles and broad learning outcomes of general education. (The hidden curriculum refers to the set of unstated values, norms and beliefs implicitly transmitted through the selection of course material, the way the classes are structured and how content is delivered and evaluated, in contrast to the formally stated and sanctioned aspects of educational experience.)

3.2.7 in keeping with the broadening holistic orientation of general education, work with conceptions of learning outcomes and competencies that are based on the totality of human "action", including its subjective aspects, and that emphasize educational process, knowledge and understanding, rather than the more behaviouristic conceptions which emphasize product and performance;

3.2.8 develop an understanding of the processes and institutions that characterize our society, a respect for alternative approaches, and an appreciation of the diversity of individual/group experiences and perspectives concerning those institutions; and

3.2.9 emphasize aims, objectives and outcomes consistent with the philosophy statement, in addition to broad principles regarding content.

3.3 Pedagogy and Assessment Principles

The General Education Task Force recommends that the following pedagogy and assessment principles guide the teaching/learning process and delivery of general education courses:

3.3.1 A general education course should provide a supportive environment for discussion, inquiry and creativity as well as opportunity for practice of the skills, knowledge and discipline of a subject;

3.3.2 General education pedagogy should reflect a commitment to empowering students in their own learning by:

- being sensitive to the experiences and perspectives of the participants in the classroom with respect to race, gender, age, disability, class and sexual orientation in choice of text, presentation of content and in classroom interactions;
- democratizing the learning process by giving students a voice in determining the goals, directions, outcomes, teaching methodologies and evaluation techniques of the course;
- fostering an interactive environment that acknowledges different learning styles and that provides the opportunity and support needed to develop the skills necessary to fully benefit from the learning environment; and
- valuing learning and growth in the emotional, intuitive and rational domains.

3.3.3 Because learning includes active, participatory and experiential dimensions, pedagogy and assessment should demonstrate the applicability of theory to practice and include opportunity for the student to integrate theory, practice and reflection.

3.3.4 Assessment is an integral part of the learning process; assessment instruments should provide an opportunity to develop and consolidate learning as well as to evaluate what has been learned.

3.3.5 Regarding assessment methods:

- vary assessment instruments to reflect the complexity and individuality of learning,[22]
- build in opportunities for student self-assessment to acknowledge and support student responsibility for learning and to foster the ability to pursue continuous learning;
- design evaluation activities which are meaningful to students and which they can help plan.

4. CURRICULUM MODEL: BROAD CONTENT AREAS

4.1 Introduction

The curriculum content areas represent a recommended approach to operationalizing the CSAC General Education Council's goals and framework of broad objectives and content areas.

4.2 Broad Content Areas

The overall curriculum is based upon a revised and expanded traditional general education model. Specifically, the traditional science areas have been revised to include the

[22] Georgina Loacher, Lucy Cromwell and Kathleen O'Brien, "Assessment in Higher Education: To Serve the Learning", A paper prepared for the American Association for Higher Education under contract with the National Institute of Education for the Conference on Assessment in Higher Education at the University of South Carolina, Columbia, October 13-15, 1985: 8.

broad contributions[23] of technology, trades and crafts; the traditional social science areas have been revised to include the broad contributions of human and community services; the traditional arts & humanities have been revised to include the broad contributions of applied creative arts; and all three areas have been expanded to include interdisciplinary studies.

The General Education Task Force recommends that the following three broad content areas be established within a general education curriculum framework and that both discipline-based and interdisciplinary courses be offered in each broad content area.

4.2.1 Arts and Humanities

The Arts and Humanities are those areas of study which deal with the creative, historical, linguistic, aesthetic and spiritual dimensions of human experience as well as the world of ideas, feeling and meaning.

This content area centers on, but is not restricted to, meeting the CSAC General Education Council's goals and objectives of:

- "Aesthetic Appreciation - understand beauty, form, taste, and the role of the arts in society";[24]
- "Personal Development - gain greater self awareness, intellectual growth, well-being, understanding of others";[25] as it pertains to philosophical and spiritual issues.
- "Social Understanding - understand relationships among individuals and society";[26] especially in regard to ethical, historical, spiritual and artistic dimensions.

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[23] Broad contributions refers to an exploration of the values, cultures, history, traditions, achievements and societal influence of the trades and professions in an interdisciplinary context.
[24] CSAC, General Education in Ontario's Community Colleges, January, 1994: 5.
[25] Ibid: 8.
[26] Ibid: 9.

- "Cultural Understanding"[27] - as it pertains to understanding the cultural and linguistic diversity of Canada and the world.

4.2.2 Social Sciences

The Social Sciences are those areas of study that systematically investigate the self, society and its institutions and cultural systems, as well as the interrelationships among them.

This content area centers on, but is not restricted to meeting the CSAC General Education Council's goals and objectives of:

- "Civic Life - understanding the meaning of freedoms, rights, and participation in community and public life."[28]
- "Cultural Understanding - understanding the cultural, social, ethnic and linguistic diversity of Canada and the world."[29]
- "Personal Development - gain greater self-awareness, intellectual growth, well-being, understanding of others";[30] particularly regarding practical and theoretical study of human development and interpersonal issues.
- "Social Understanding - understand relationships among individuals and society."[31]
- "Work and the Economy - understand the meaning, history and organization of work; the working life challenges to the individual and society"[32] particularly regarding the organization and structure of work, its institutions, and the history and changing nature of work and the economy.

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[27] Ibid: 7.
[28] Ibid: 6.
[29] Ibid: 7.
[30] Ibid: 8.
[31] Ibid: 9.

4.2.3 Science and Technologies

The Science and Technologies content area encompasses the study of the natural and physical world, including its principles, methods for discovering new scientific knowledge, history and impact on human life. It also includes the study of the relationship of the technologies, trades and crafts to science, and the cultural history, contribution and impact of technologies, trades and crafts on society.

This content area centers on, but is not retricted to, meeting the CSAC General Education Council's goals and objectives of:

- "Understanding Science - appreciate the contribution of science to the development of civilization, human understanding and potential."[33]
- "Understanding Technology - understand the interrelationship between the development and use of technology and society and the ecosystem."[34]
- "Work and Economy"[35] - as it pertains to the connection among the technologies, social and cultural attitudes to work, and labour issues.
- "Personal Development"[36] - as it pertains to issues of health and well-being.

4.3 Examples of Courses in the Content Areas

It should be noted that the disciplines, as originally conceived, were "area[s] of knowledge for serving the learner, not for possession by the learned"[37] and more concerned with practice than abstract theory. A disciplinary approach gives the learner a language and method of inquiry into a particular field of knowledge.

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[32] Ibid: 12.
[33] Ibid: 10.
[34] Ibid: 11.
[35] Ibid: 12.
[36] Ibid: 8.
[37] Georgina Loacher, "Revitalizing the Academic Disciplines by Clarifying Outcomes," op. cit.

Interdisciplinary courses include treatments of a single theme or issue from the perspectives of more than one discipline and should be predominantly reflective of themes and issues associated with one of the broad content areas. For instance, interdisciplinary courses in science and technology should revolve around themes, issues and topics from that domain.

4.3.1 Examples of disciplinary courses in the Arts and Humanities are:

- World Religions
- Introduction to Philosophy
- Renaissance Art
- Modern Urban Architecture
- Canadian Literature
- Post-Revolutionary Chinese Theatre

4.3.2 Examples of interdisciplinary courses in the Arts and Humanities are

- Women in Religious Drama and Literature
- Meaning and Expression in the Visual Arts
- Poetry, East and West
- Myth as Meaning Maker
- African Art and Philosophy
- Italian Language and History

4.3.3 Examples of disciplinary courses in the social sciences are

- Life Span Psychology
- Political Science
- Anthropology
- Economics
- Introductory Social Psychology

4.3.4 Examples of interdisciplinary courses in the social sciences are

- Labour Studies
- Literature as Propaganda
- Cross Cultural Studies
- Mass Media

- Nationalism and the Modern World
- Canada's Political Economy
- Canadian Society

4.3.5 Examples of disciplinary courses in the Science and Technologies category are

- Introductory Physics
- Biochemistry
- Human Anatomy and Physiology
- Mathematics (not on a skill level) such as the History of Mathematics, Number Theory and Game Theory
- Astronomy

4.3.6 Examples of interdisciplinary courses in the Science and Technologies category are

- The Printing Press and the Protestant Reformation
- Ecology, Survival, or Both? Challenge in the Global Community
- The Scientific Method and Everyday Life
- Microbiology and its Effect on World Development
- Robotics: Ethical, Social and Political Dimensions
- The Arts and Trades and the Social Organization of Labour

4.4 Equity Issues and General Education Curriculum

The "Equity Across the Curriculum Report" of the Program Task Force's Equity Resource Group raised questions and made recommendations about the curriculum model proposed by the General Education Task Force in the Interim Report.

While observing that the general education philosophy statement and pedogaogy recommendations affirmed the value of multicultural awareness and respect for diversity, the Equity Across the Curriculum Report recommended that general education curriculum be sensitive to and take up the current

debate regarding inclusivity/exclusivity in the disciplines; urged that other curriculum models be considered by the Task Force; and recommended that the proposed general education foundation course content include equity concepts. Additionally, the Equity Report suggested that general education might be the location to begin curriculum reform and transformation.

The General Education Task Force responded to these statements as an opportunity for review and improvement of its recommendations and for discussion of issues raised by equity within an educational context, and dedicated a substantial portion of time and energy to taking up the issues.

In discussing equity, the Task Force decided to make explicit some of the assumptions, thinking and processes which had been operant, but perhaps not clearly stated, in its earlier recommendations:

4.4.1 Breadth of choice is an essential component of respect for difference in curriculum; thus a general education curriculum should offer a wide "menu" of interdisciplinary courses and traditional courses.

4.4.2 The disciplines can and should be presented in a manner that examines their underlying assumptions and the limitations of their methodologies and histories.

4.4.3 A discipline-based curriculum model which fosters critical inquiry can and does liberate students by encouraging examination of assumptions, promoting reflective skepticism and resisting dualistic, doctrinaire or simplistic explanations of complex realities.

4.4.4 The review of materials for inappropriate bias as well as the inclusion of educational materials which reflect the range of debate on controversial issues are both important parts of all current curriculum development in colleges.

4.4.5 Unless one is simply promoting equity in itself, equity in education often requires less that content change than that the approach to teaching change.

4.4.6 While equity involves dealing with differences and coming to an understanding of what oppression is, education is not only about power and social transformation; hence equity should be regarded as one important principle among many important educational principles and aims.

The following points regarding equity in curriculum emerged in the Task Force's discussion of the issues and influenced or are expressed in some of its recommendations:

4.4.7 Key concepts in the prevailing equity discussion are sometimes ambiguous and/or poorly defined.

4.4.8 Addressing Eurocentrism in curriculum does not mean overlooking European influence or rejecting disciplines that have European origins but ensuring that the contributions of other peoples are valued and that critical reflection is exercised; moreover such disciplines have in many respects been expanded and achieved a more global status.

4.4.9 Emphasis should be placed on developing a "culture of equity" on the lived level of student-teacher interaction within the College, in part through meaningful faculty/student involvement in decisions respecting curriculum.

4.4.10 The general education philosophy statement contains many principles that bear on equity in curriculum; these should be reflected in the outcomes for general education courses.

4.4.11 Responsibility for implementing equity across the curriculum belongs to the college as a whole, including generic skills and vocational courses.

5. CRITERIA FOR THE BROAD CONTENT AREAS

The General Education Task Force recommends that the following statements serve as criteria for determining appropriate content for courses in the three broad content areas.

5.1 Arts and Humanities

Disciplinary and interdisciplinary courses in this content area will

5.1.1 explore broad themes and issues associated with the arts and humanities;

5.1.2 introduce the languages, histories and methods of the arts and humanities;

5.1.3 critically explore assumptions implicit in the languages, histories and methods of the arts and humanities;

5.1.4 present a variety of perspectives on the issues;

5.1.5 examine interconnections among the arts and humanities and the student's own and other cultures, societies and institutions;

5.1.6 provide opportunity for students to critically reflect on and cogently express themselves on broad themes and issues relating to the art and humanities;

5.1.7 explore the relationship of arts and humanities to the continuity of the human experience in a culturally diverse world;

5.1.8 enable students to more effectively participate in the cultural, social, political and economic life of the community; and

5.1.9 encourage the pursuit of ongoing learning in the arts and humanities.

5.2 Social Sciences

Disciplinary and interdisciplinary courses in this content area will

5.2.1 explore themes and issues associated with the social sciences;

5.2.2 introduce students to the languages, histories and methods of the social sciences;

5.2.3 critically explore assumptions implicit in the languages, histories and methods of the social sciences;

5.2.4 introduce a variety of perspectives and theories relating to the social sciences;

5.2.5 examine interconnections among issues and themes in the social sciences with the society and culture in which the student lives, as well as with other societies and cultures;

5.2.6 enable students to participate more effectively in the cultural, social, political and economic life of their communities;

5.2.7 explore through the perspectives of the social sciences, the continuities of the human experience in a culturally diverse world; and

5.2.8 encourage the pursuit of ongoing learning in the social sciences.

5.3 Science and Technologies

Disciplinary and interdisciplinary courses in this area will

5.3.1 address broad themes and issues associated with science and technologies, including various perspectives and their limitations;

5.3.2 introduce the student to the language, history, methods and major developments of science and technologies, trades and crafts;

5.3.3 critically explore assumptions implicit in the languages, histories and methods of science and technologies, trades and crafts;

5.3.4 explore the relationship among historical, cultural, social, political, philosophical/religious and economic factors in societies and the development of technologies, trades and crafts and/or science;

5.3.5 explore the impact and implications of scientific and technological developments for the society in which the student lives as well as for other societies;

5.3.6 examine how science, technologies, trades and crafts are interconnected;

5.3.7 enable students to participate more effectively in the social, political and economic lives of their communities;

5.3.8 provide opportunity for students to critically reflect on and cogently express themselves on themes and issues related to science and technologies, trades and crafts; and

5.3.9 encourage the pursuit of ongoing learning in science, technologies, trades and crafts.

6. LEARNING OUTCOMES

6.1 Introduction

The task of developing learning outcomes was the most difficult one for the Curriculum Subcommittee and the Task Force. The Task Force was constrained by the CSAC directive that specific learning outcomes for general education be developed at each college. However, the Task Force clearly recognized that, in accepting an outcomes model and doing the practical work of developing learning outcomes, it was implicitly endorsing assumptions with which it was troubled, or which it rejected, about the aims of education and the nature of the educational process. The practical problem for the Task Force was developing strategies for dealing with the outcomes requirement in a manner that was acceptable and useful.

Deliberations turned to identifying and evaluating the assumptions in outcomes-based models, determining whether the integrity of the qualitative aims of general education would be compromised by adoption of the outcomes model and exploring how outcomes could be redefined to be more acceptable to a general education curriculum.

6.2 Outcomes-Oriented Education and General Education

The Task Force explored the issues regarding learning outcomes in two presentations and a seminar held for its members and in Task Force and Curriculum Subcommittee meetings; representatives attended two conferences addressing outcomes, and members researched the literature. The debate in the Task Force reflected the debate among educators as a whole about the merits and limitations of outcomes-based education. The following observations, criticisms and proposals about outcomes-based education in general, and about learning outcomes and general education in particular, represent a consolidation of views drawn from the Task Force discussions, presentations, conferences and research.

6.2.1 Learning outcomes are basically behaviourist and empiricist in nature; an empiricist approach to education is reductionist and does not do justice to the complexity of the learning process.

6.2.2 Organizing education in terms of learning outcomes has its socio-economic origin in employer-driven competency models and has tended to serve and perpetuate social class and employer interests. The learning outcomes model in the community college appears to be a vehicle for accomplishing social class discipline with regard to workers by institutionalizing accountability for teaching certain mind sets (attitudes) and skills sets.

6.2.3 Learning outcomes systematically omit aspects of the educational experience that do not lend themselves to measurement although they may be among the most valuable learning achieved by a learner. The message conveyed is that unless the learning is measurable, it has no value.

6.2.4 Organizing education in terms of learning outcomes conceals the learner's role and responsibility in learning and represents a kind of external control over both teaching and learning. The curriculum is "teacher proofed", with instruction as "means" and outcomes as "ends"[38].

6.2.5 The language of learning outcomes needs to be complemented by a language attentive to the teaching/learning process that would reflect and legitimize this essential aspect of the educational experience.

6.2.6 Strategies for dealing with the requirement to specify outcomes for general education could include

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[38] E.O. Bevis, "Comparison of Critical and Caring Paradigms", a handout distributed at the conference on Caring, Critical Thinking and Praxis: Imperatives for Nursing Curriculum, Humber College, Etobicoke, Ontario, Oct. 18 and 19, 1993: 2.

- recommending the use of a wide range of evaluative techniques in assessing student performance, including some that are not customary, such as focus groups and longitudinal studies;

- developing many aims and goals statements to indicate the breadth of the educational experience and to operationalize those areas of the educational experience, such as content and skills, that lend themselves to being described in terms of measureable outcomes;

- articulating learning outcomes simply as a statement of what the teacher's educational goals are and how students will be assessed in terms of those goals; and

- involving the entire institution in a process of discussing the strengths and limitations of formulating education in terms of learning outcomes, and ensuring that the college understands and supports the position taken in this regard by general education.[39]

6.2.7 Some practical benefits of articulating learning outcomes for general education courses are that

- they are useful in discussions with advisory committees, students and other members of the college community who are unclear about what general education is or what students are expected to do or know;

- in response to the concern that organizing education in terms of learning outcomes serves to perpetuate employer interests and social class structures, they can be used to generate criticism of and thoughtful positions on these institutional structures; and

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[39] C. Cockerton and W. Hanna, A presentation to the General Education Task Force, Task Force Meeting of October 28, 1993, George Brown College, Toronto, Ontario.

- in response to the concern that learning outcomes set up a system of accountability to college administration and established political and economic interests, they can be constructed so that the teacher is responsible to the student for the development and assessment of learning outcomes.[40]

6.2.8 The General Education Task Force recommends adoption of the following guidelines regarding learning outcomes and general education:

- outcomes should be articulated to capture as much as possible the scope and complexity of the process of learning; a purely behaviouristic outcomes model should be rejected;

- attention should be given to making a place for learners' own learning goals and outcomes in the learning process;

- general education learning outcomes should be defined by students and teachers; both groups should be represented on the General Education Course Development Committee;

- contextualize and preface the role and place of outcomes in general education by the inclusion of a brief statement of the "aims of general education" on all general education course outlines distributed to students and by discussing the nature and role of general education with students when courses are introduced;

- parts of the General Education Philosophy Statement can be and are articulated as broad outcomes statements and should be integrated into the outcomes for the broad content areas and into specific course outcomes;

- outcomes for the general education content areas will be refined by the General Education Course Development Committee;

- some general education courses, because of the nature of their content, may define very specific learning outcomes; however the goals and aims of the philosophy statement must be reflected in their learning outcomes; and

- as specified in Ministry guidelines, outcomes will be at a post-secondary level.[41]

6.3 Learning Outcomes for the Broad Content Areas

The General Education Task Force recommends the adoption of the following broad learning outcomes for courses in the broad content areas:

It is intended that the student will meet these outcomes as they apply to a particular course in the content area.

Broad Outcomes for the Arts and Humanities

Upon completion of disciplinary or interdisciplinary courses in the arts and humanities, students will be able to:

6.3.1 appropriately and thoughtfully use introductory college level language and concepts of the arts and humanities in reading, discussing or writing about issues, themes and topics in the arts and humanities;

6.3.2 present the historical context and ethical dimensions of themes, topics and issues in the arts and humanities;

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40 Ibid.

41 The College Standard and Accrediatation Council, General Education in Ontario's Community Colleges January 1994: 2.

6.3.3 explain the key methodologies utilized by the arts and humanities disciplines;

6.3.4 critically discuss assumptions implicit in and limitations of the languages, histories and methods of inquiry of the arts and humanities;

6.3.5 evaluate issues in the arts and humanities from a variety of theoretical and other perspectives;

6.3.6 critically evaluate the role of the arts and humanities in their own and other cultures and societies;

6.3.7 use methods of inquiry of the arts and humanities, including posing analytical questions, in examining issues in the arts and humanities;

6.3.8 discuss the relationship of the arts and humanities to the continuity of human experience in a culturally diverse world; and

6.3.9 demonstrate research skills necessary to support inquiry and lifelong learning in the arts and humanities.

Broad Outcomes for the Social Sciences

Upon completion of disciplinary or interdisciplinary courses in the social sciences, students will be able to:

6.3.10 appropriately and thoughtfully use introductory college level language and concepts of the social sciences in reading, discussing or writing about themes, issues and topics associated with the social sciences;

6.3.11 present the historical context and ethical dimensions of themes, topics and issues in the social sciences;

6.3.12 explain the key methodologies utilized in the social sciences;

6.3.13 critically discuss the assumptions implicit in and limitations of the languages, histories and methodologies of the social sciences;

6.3.14 evaluate issues in the social sciences from a variety of theoretical and other perspectives;

6.3.15 from the perspective of the social sciences, thoughtfully discuss interconnections among topics and issues in Canadian culture and society and other cultures and societies;

6.3.16 use methods of inquiry of the social sciences, including posing analytical questions, in examining social issues;

6.3.17 explain the continuities of the human experience in a culturally diverse world from the perspective of the social sciences; and

6.3.18 demonstrate research skills necessary to support inquiry and lifelong learning in the social sciences.

Broad Outcomes for Science and Technologies

Upon completion of disciplinary or interdisciplinary courses in the science and technologies content area, students will be able to:

6.3.19 identify and explain basic scientific and technological concepts essential to functioning as scientifically and technologically informed and critically thinking adults in contemporary Canadian society;

6.3.20 explain the scientific method and its application to increasing knowledge of the world, making decisions, solving problems and thinking critically, as well as its limitations and assumptions;

6.3.21 discuss the process and value of practical problem solving and creative thinking as a thinking strategem, its link to developments in technologies, trades and crafts, and its contribution to the development of the scientific method;

6.3.22 discuss issues, themes and problems in science and technologies, trades and crafts within a multidisciplinary perspective, such as its social, ethical, historical, political and economic dimensions;

6.3.23 discuss the natures of technologies, trades and crafts, their development, and their relation to the human and natural worlds;

6.3.24 collect appropriate data, analyze and draw logical conclusions in real life contexts relating to science and technologies, trades and crafts;

6.3.25 discuss the cultural history, values, traditions and contributions of the technologies, trades and crafts; and

6.3.26 use methods of inquiry of science, technologies, trades and crafts including posing analytical questions, in examining issues in their fields.

7. FOUNDATIONS COURSE

The Task Force recommends the adoption of a required first semester general education foundations course for all post secondary students across all divisions.

7.1 The course has the following main objectives:

7.1.1 to introduce the students to all the general education goals specified by the CSAC General Education Council, as well as to general content

and methods of inquiry and their limitations in the three broad content areas;

7.1.2 to ensure that all students will be presented with certain common required material;

7.1.3 to give the student an opportunity to experience a sampling of the practice, methods and processes of each main content area; and

7.1.4 to give the student an opportunity to critically reflect on and analyze relevant issues in each of the three main content areas, including the diverse human experience of common issues and the problem of unity and difference in the human context.

7.2 To provide students with enriched learning experience, the foundations course should be team taught, when possible, with specialists teaching each content area.

7.3 The foundation course should give students an understanding of their rights and responsibilities in Canadian society including worker rights and responsiblities as defined in current labour and human rights legislation.

7.4 The current general education course, "Being Human", should be considered in developing the proposed foundations course with expanded objectives and content in science and technologies and arts and humanities.

7.5 A second-term general education elective which expands and builds upon the required foundations course should be developed.

7.6 The foundations course will be developed by the General Education Course Development Committee.

8. BREADTH OF CONTENT

To ensure that students are provided with breadth of experience and choice in general education courses, the Task Force recommends that

8.1 students be required to elect one course from each of the broad content areas;

8.2. interdisciplinary and disciplinary courses be offered within each broad content area and clearly distinguished in course registration listings. Students can elect either kind of course; thus a variety of interests students bring to course election can be accommodated, such as transferability of credit for advanced standing, articulation and personal preference; and

8.3 interdisciplinary courses be assigned to a broad content area based on an assessment of issues, themes and topics and course objectives in the course outline.

9. INCLUSION OF SKILLS IN GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES

The General Education Task Force clearly recognized that general education courses and generic skills are strongly linked and that general education can be among the primary deliverers of generic skills.

The General Education Task Force recommends that some generic skills should be developed in all general education courses and included in course outcomes and broad content area outcomes. General education courses should specify

9.1 what skill(s) will be developed;

9.2 what level of proficiency is expected; and

9.3 whether proficiency in a skill is a prerequisite for the course.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL EDUCATION

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of an implementation plan for the college was one of the priorities of the General Education Task Force in its Interim Report. Since then, the implementation recommendations have been reviewed and approved by various College bodies, and are both guiding the implementation of general education within the College, and undergoing revision as they are implemented within the changing college environment.

The co-chairs have acted on behalf of the Task Force in assisting with operationalizing the implementation (See Appendix B). However, their involvement was guided by the aims of the original recommendations. In addition, Task Force members were apprised of developments and consulted, when possible, for their advice on modifications to the original proposals.

In addressing implementation in this report, the Task Force faces two challenges: first, how to provide a clear snapshot of what is actually a moving object with many, as yet, unresolved details; and second; how to present the evolution of the proposals without tediously documenting the bureaucratic history of the earlier recommendations over the past few months.

Consequently, the focus of this section will be

a) to provide an overview of the main emerging structures and policies that are being used to organize the development and delivery of general education within the college;

b) to highlight significant modifications to the initial proposals; and

c) to present further recommendations of the Task Force on issues that have emerged as the result of implementing general education.

Those who are interested in a complete status report on each specific implementation recommendation made in the Interim Report are asked to

consult the revised recommendations of George Brown College's Academic Plan Steering Committee.[42]

2. APPROVAL AND PRIORITIZING OF IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Approval Process

After submitting the Interim Report to the Academic Plan Steering Committee, the work of the Task Force was brought together with the reports of the other Academic Plan Task Forces and put through a lengthy approval process. The reports of all the Task Forces were distributed throughout the college community and a number of open discussion sessions were held at each campus in the Spring, 1993. The reports were then presented to the Board of Governor's Education Subcommittee and finally approved by the Board of Governors.

2.2 Priority Recommendations

In June, 1993, the Vice President Academic requested the four Task Force co-chairs identify and prioritize the top five recommendations from their reports. The General Education Priority Recommendations were to be subject to ratification by the Task Force when it reconstituted in the fall, but were regarded as necessary to assist the college in developing a provisional implementation strategy over the summer (Appendix E).

The areas of priority identified by the General Education Task Force Interim Report concerned

- adopting the recommended philosophy statement;
- establishing a General Education Department as well as any other structures and/or committees needed to develop curriculum for September, 1994;
- developing a multifaceted approach to remediation in the generic skill areas at both the post-secondary and non-post-secondary levels;

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[42] Recommendations: A Companion Document for the 2002 Summary. Revised for the February Academic Plan Steering Committee Meeting.

- human resource development initiatives related to general education;
- and utilizing the college's Program Review and Revision Process (i.e., Quality Scan) to implement general education and generic skills.

The Task Force's priority recommendations were reviewed and accepted by the Council of Deans and by Management Board, and revisited by members of the Academic Plan Steering Committee before being operationalized. A key part of operationalization involved the pragmatic task of developing an Action Plan in October, 1993 that

- clarified and sequenced the activities involved in each recommendation;
- specified who was responsible for each activity; and
- set a target date for accomplishing the activity.

It was at this stage the initial recommendations began undergoing modification.

3. STATUS OF THE PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 General Education Philosophy Statement

3.1.1 The Original Priority Recommendation

As its initial priority area, the Task Force identified *"the College's adoption of the "Recommended Philosophy Statement" along with its related recommendations regarding the inclusion of "balanced education" in the College's Mission Statement and a statement concerning the nature and purpose of general education in the 1994-95 calendar."*

3.1.2 Developments

The recommended general education philosophy statement has been approved by the College and is currently in the process of being incorporated in the College's broader Educational Philosophy statement

along with key concepts, themes and principles that emerged from the work of the other three Academic Plan Task Force reports.

Concerning the inclusion of "balanced education" in the College's Mission Statement, the Board of Governors and College Council have constituted a committee to make recommendations regarding the College's Mission Statement, and will consider the Task Force's proposal among others.

Finally, regarding the inclusion of a statement on general education in the 1994-95 calendar, information will be inserted in the Dean's Spring mailings concerning the Ministry's requirements, the College's philosophy statement on general education as well as the implications of these requirements in particular programs.

3.2 General Education Department and Related Committees

3.2.1 The Original Priority Recommendation

As its second priority area, the Task Force identified *"the establishment of a General Education Department to manage the development and delivery of general education across the College as well as whatever other organizational structures and/or committees are necessary to develop curriculum for September, 1994 and afterwards (e.g., General Education Course Development Committee; General Education Review Committee)"*

Regarding organizational structure, the Task Force had recommended the creation of a distinct General Education Department; a Course Development Committee and a General Education Review Committee appended to the college's program Approval process. The overall structure is portrayed in Diagram 3.[43]

Since this recommendation involves several structures, it will be discussed in two parts. First we will focus on the department, and then on the related committees.

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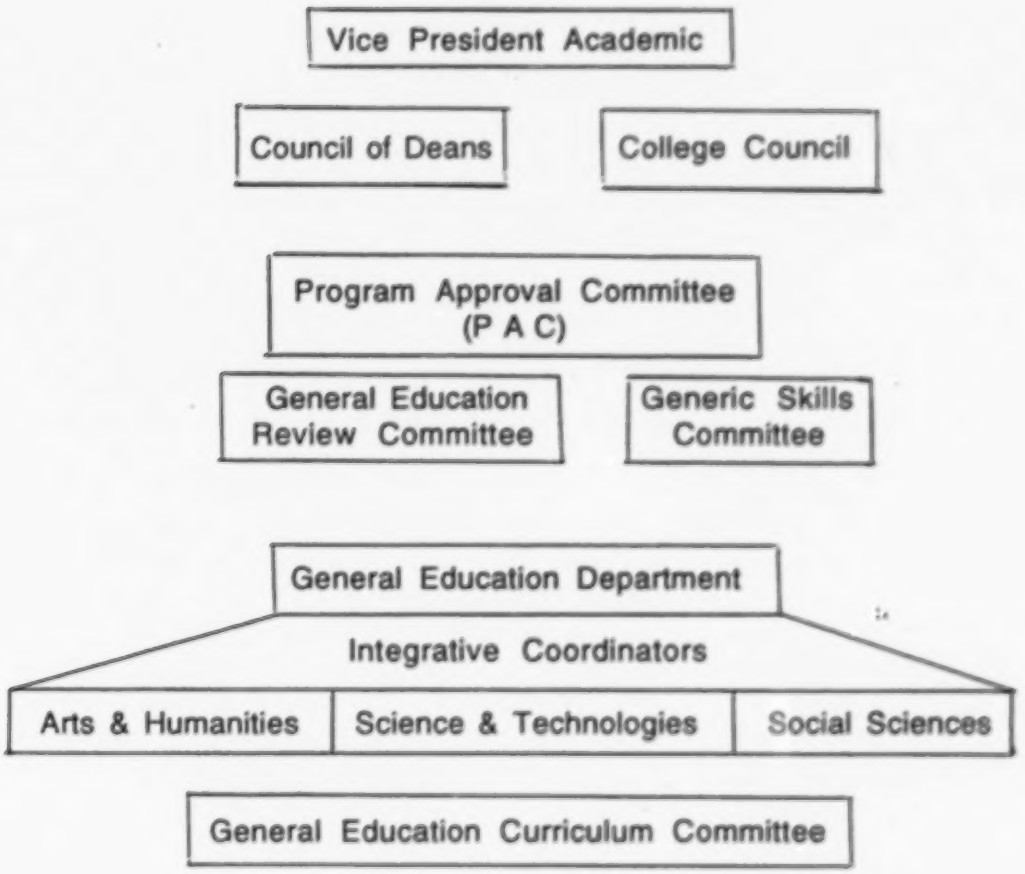
[43] For the original mandate, membership and structure of the committees, please see the General Education Task Force, Interim Report to the Academic Plan Steering Committee, op. cit; 39,40,48 and 49.

Diagram 3

George Brown College of Applied Arts and Technology

GENERAL EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

(Proposed, April 1993)



3.2.2 Developments Concerning the General Education Department

The decision to establish a General Education Department was officially announced by the Office of the President in the Fall, 1993. The College's Deans and Directors Team proposed that

a) the Department be housed in the newly reconfigured Faculty of Academic Studies and Resources since this division provided academic courses and services to all others throughout the college; and

b) this arrangement be reviewed after five years.

The process of reorganizing some departments and faculty within the Academic Studies and Resources is underway. A Liberal Arts and Science Department has been established which will provide leadership in the development and delivery of general education. In addition a Mathematics and English Department has also been created to focus the development of generic skills at St. James Campus.

Some implementation issues have emerged. First, the reorganization of some departments and faculty is not simply an administrative decision, but requires time to carry out a process of consultation in which faculty, support staff and administrators could consider the proposals, participate in shaping any new departments and their mandates as well as selecting chairs.

Second, some concerns have been raised about establishing a General Education Department in the proposed manner. While the decision to house the Department within Academic Studies and Resources may make academic and administrative sense, it may create the preception that general education excludes vocational faculty and restimulate the past conflicts over academic territory even though this was neither the intent nor the way the development and delivery of general education is actually being structured in the College.

In addition, it was recognized that this newly created Department would be undertaking an enormous task because of the work of responding to and implementing Ministry requirements within the College while simultaneously coordinating the development and delivery of general education courses.

In response to the above concerns regarding a General Education Department the Task Force supports the proposal to review whatever structure is implemented in five years, and recommends that

1. the College reconsider the option of a stand alone general education department;

2. the College consider the possibility of co-chairs for the department;

3. the Department have a visible presence on both campuses; and

4. the Task Force co-chairs meet with the Departments who had the most concerns over the proposal and address their concerns and suggest alternatives.

3.2.3 General Education Implementation Coordinators

After considering the above concerns, the College has instituted a transitional measure by creating two half-time General Education Implementation Coordinators positions. The initial tasks of the Implementation Coordinators are:

- to assist the College in implementing the recommendations of CSAC's General Education Council and those of the College's General Education Task Force;

- to facilitate the development of a general education curriculum for the College:

- to assist with the creation of a delivery system for general education across the College;

- to serve as a resource to each Division in developing and realizing its general education plan; and

- to promote professional development relating to general education.

3.2.4 Developments Concerning the Related Committees

The original recommendations regarding the General Education Review Committee and the Course Development Committee have undergone

significant revision. The Course Development Committee was originally intended as a transitional body that would develop the foundations course and assist faculty to develop new courses, notably Science and Technology faculty who were anticipated to experience the most disruption with the introduction of the general education requirements.

By contrast, the General Education Review Committee was to be at an arms length distance to the General Education Department and part of the College's program approval process (i.e., Program Approval Committee). Its complex mandate basically revolved around assessing and approving proposed and existing general education courses; and refining criteria for the aims, outcomes and content of general education courses in the College.

However, concerns were raised by key College decision-making bodies that this committee structure was complex and unwieldy. In particular, there were concerns that the responsibilities of the Review Committee were too large; that it constituted yet another tier in the college's program approval process; and that it may end up replicating work that would be done, and done more effectively by the Course Development Committee.

3.2.5 A Reconstituted General Education Curriculum Committee

As a result, the Vice-President Academic under advisement from the Academic Plan Steering Committee effectively dissolved the proposed Review Committee, and redistributed its functions. First, the General Education Implementation Coordinators have been directed to expand the original mandate of the Course Development Committee to include

a) assisting faculty in the College with revising existing vocational or vocationally applied general education courses so as to meet the general education guidelines and criteria;

b) refining criteria and guidelines for curriculum areas that are somewhat ambiguous in terms of the current curriculum categories (e.g., foreign languages, managing organizations, etc.);

c) becoming involved in professional development initiatives for developing and delivering general education; and

d) reviewing and assessing proposed general education courses.

This committee has met, changed its name to the General Education Curriculum Committee, approved an expanded mandate, broadened its membership structure, and clarified its terms of operations to be consistent with the directive. (See Appendix F)

At the same time, the approval function of the General Education Review Committee has now been folded into that of the Programs Approval Committee, which will be directed to have at least one specialist in General Education as a member.

Diagram 4 represents the revised overall structure of general education at the College in light of the modifications discussed above.

3.3 Remediation

3.3.1 Original Priority Recommendation

As its third area of priority the Task Force identified *"the set of recommendations regarding the development of a multifaceted approach to remediation in the generic skills areas at both the post-secondary and non-post-secondary levels."* It further stated that *"The specific recommendations concerning the development of entrance and exit levels of proficiency and methods of assessment should be undertaken by the Generic Skills Subcommittee."*

The recommendations concerning remediation emerged from the research the consultant did for the Interim Report[44]; discussions with staff throughout the college; as well as recognizing the significant number of students who do not have English competence to handle general education courses. The Task Force found the college has been taking on an increasing, but largely unrecognized, responsibility for helping students improve their generic skills proficiencies to assimilate college level vocational material. This was creating an internal pressure on course hours which would have been used to teach vocational material, at the very same time that the Ministry was reducing vocational program hours.

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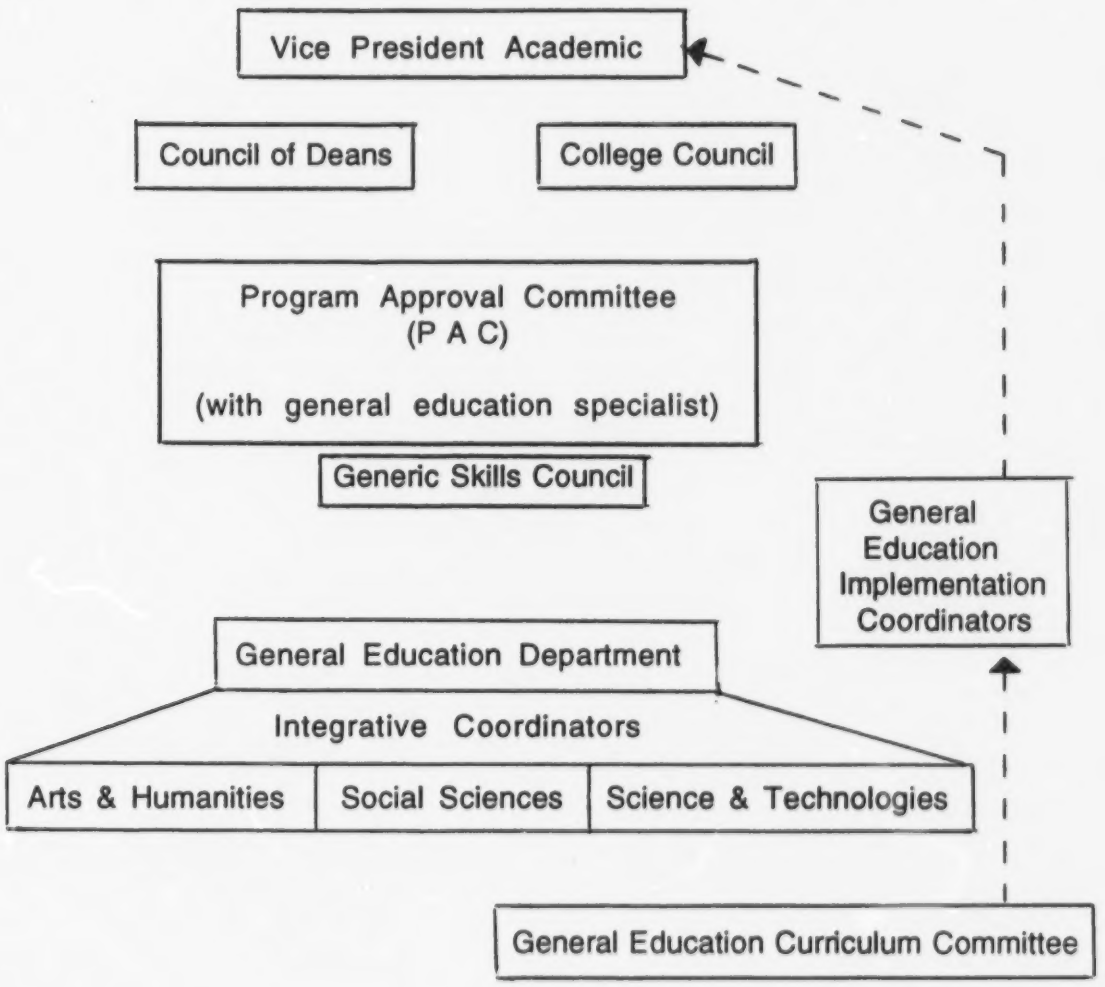
[44]Barry Kaplan, George Brown College's General Education Task Force: Consultant's Report, George Brown College, May 24, 1993.

Diagram 4

George Brown College of Applied Arts and Technology

GENERAL EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

(February,1994)



The Task Force made several recommendations concerning generic skills in its Interim Report. These included: addressing remediation outside of current program hours, where reasonable; providing a wide range of services and resources to assist students in strengthening their skills both before and during the program; and providing general education courses for English for Academic Purposes students. However, the Task Force was aware that remediation is a complex matter, involving many difficult issues; such as

- determining what constitutes "college-level" proficiency;
- directing practically-inclined students who may not have been previously successful in academics into academically demanding settings;
- developing assessment tools;
- streaming; and
- creating strategies such as referral to remediation programs which may be perceived as obstacles by students who need to be encouraged rather than discouraged.

3.3.2 Developments

The Task Force did request the Generic Skills Subcommittee examine this complex area as a key part of its work over the fall. It also requested the Subcommittee:

a) involve Access and Student Services in examining the issues;

b) seek solutions, where possible, that did not require using additional hours in post-secondary programs; and

c) consider the issues and recommendations concerning remediation that were identified in the General Education Task Force Interim Report in their deliberations.

The Generic Skills Subcommittee has made important recommendations concerning this broad area in its Final Report; established working groups in the areas of mathematics and communications to address assessment

and remediation; and identified issues requiring further work for the College's Generic Skills Committee.

3.4 Human Resource Development

3.4.1 Original Priority Recommendation

As its fourth area of priority the Task Force identified *"the set of recommendations regarding Human Resource Development."*

The Task Force's Interim Report recommendations regarding Human Resource development included

- attention to generic skill proficiency in hiring and staff training programs;
- offering workshops in the areas of pedagogy, curriculum design and evaluation addressing the incorporation of generic skills in vocational and general education programs; and
- a strategy for possible retraining of faculty.

3.4.2 Developments

The Vice-President Academic and Vice-President Human Resources have agreed on a model for addressing professional development needs related to the implementation of general education in the college. Human Resources will be conducting professional development activities under the joint management of the two Vice-Presidents.

In addition, the General Education Implementation Coordinators have met with the Staff Training and Development Office and set up a program of workshops in June and August, 1994 on teaching the foundations course and developing general education courses in the context of the General Education Council's broad framework and the Task Force's curriculum guidelines.

Finally, representatives of the Task Force will be part of a metro college panel seminar in May, 1994 that identifies and addresses issues of

common concern with regard to implementing general education in the colleges.

3.5. Program Review and Revision Process

3.5.1 Original Priority Recommendation

As its concluding area of priority the Task Force identified "*the set of recommendations regarding the utilization of the College's Program and Revision Process to implement CSAC requirements and College guidelines concerning general education and generic skills.*"

The basis of the original recommendation was that the program review process enabled departments to consider the general education requirement in the context of their whole program rather than as an isolated component to be added on. In order to facilitate this, the Task Force co-chairs developed an initial insert for the Quality Scan handbook drawn from the broad definitions introduced by Vision 2000 and the operational definitions developed by the consultant in his report. In addition, members of the Task Force offered to serve as resource persons to programs undergoing review.

3.5.2 Developments and Further Recommendations

While programs have been using Quality Scan to address general education and generic skills, they have had difficulty doing assessments and planning given that the General Education Council's framework of goals, broad objectives and content areas and its guidelines for implementation were not available at the time of the program review. Similarly, the final reports of the General Education Task Force and its Generic Skills Subcommittee were not available until recently. A final difficulty has been that the formal bodies proposed to review and serve as resources for developing general education courses have only recently been established.

As a result programs undergoing review have not benefitted from this part of the process as much as they might otherwise have. In order to strengthen the program review and revision process the Task Force recommends

1. the sections on general education and generic skills in the Quality

Scan handbook be revised and expanded in light of the Task Force's Final Report, the Generic Skills Subcommittee's Final Report and the General Education Council's recent report;

2. programs be notified of the past and current members of the General Education Task Force and General Education Curriculum Committee, and of the possibility of calling on them as a resource to programs undergoing review; and

3. General Education Implementation Coordinators or members of the General Education Curriculum Committee assist with Quality Scan either by having a representative at the presentations or by providing a written response to the presentation.

3.5.3 Divisional Implementation Action Plans

Another review initiative is also being undertaken as a result of the General Education Council's request that colleges develop and present implementation plans concerning how the general education requirement will be met for the 1994-95 year to the Council by late April, 1994.[45]

The Vice President Academic has requested that the General Education Implementation Coordinators in consultation with the Council of Deans devise an approach to developing an "action plan" for each Division. The proposed approach is that each Division will use the program charts developed by the Task Force's consultant as part of the Interim Report[46] to

i) assess the general education currently in the program;

ii) develop a step by step plan for how the programs will meet the 1994-95 general education requirement by September, 1994;

iii) identify the resources that will be needed to implement the requirement (e.g., financial cost, course development resources, human development needs, etc.); and

iv) identify any major difficulties they anticipate encountering and the reasons for these difficulties; detail how the programs plan to

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[45] CSAC, General Education in Ontario Community Colleges, op. cit: 14-15.

[46] Barry Kaplan, George Brown College's General Education Task Force: Consultant's Report. George Brown College, May 24, 1993.

address these major difficulties; and when they anticipate they will have been overcome.

6. Additional Implementation Recommendations

In addition to the five priority areas, the Task Force proposes the following regarding the implementation of general education and generic skills in the College.

a) Recognition of Work

The development and implementation of general education and generic skills curriculum has required, and will continue to require, a great deal of participation from college staff. However, staff are being called upon at a time when the College is facing numerous other changes and new initiatives resulting from Ministry directives. The Task Force has repeatedly encountered a concern from College staff over the amount of time involved in attempting to produce quality work within the constraints of very short due dates.

The Task Force recommends that management and union meet as soon as possible to examine human resource issues involved in implementation, including recognition and compensation for work being done to implement Ministry directives.

b) Registration by Course and Program Integrity

While the Task Force continues its support for establishing a system of registration by course, it also recognizes the integrity and coherence of programs that work with program-based registration. As such, the Task Force recommends

- respect for the coherence and the developmental process of programs be a part of establishing a registration by course system; and
- program faculty and administration have a significant voice in the establishment of the registration by course system for the program.

V. FINAL REPORT OF THE GENERIC SKILLS SUBCOMMITTEE

1. BACKGROUND OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

The Generic Skills Subcommittee was constituted in February, 1993 to address issues, develop curriculum and propose an implemenattion plan for the five generic skill areas identified by the Ministry--analytic reasoning, communication, computer literacy, interpersonal skills, and mathematics. The Subcommittee completed its final report in January, 1994.

The specific tasks of the Subcommittee were

1. to examine the assessment of generic skills;

2. to determine broad entry level proficiencies, notably in the areas of communications and mathematics, which were required for successful completion of post-secondary programs;

3. to determine broad exit level proficiencies for the five generic skill areas;

4. to identify and address curriculum and pedagogy issues;

5. to examine possible delivery startegies; and

6. to develop an implementation strategy for generic skills across the college.

The work of the Subcommittee took place in two stages. In the first stage, five focus groups were established, one for each generic skill area, comprised of individuals with expertise in the area. Each group was asked to propose the broad skills students in post-secondary programs should have upon graduation, and to make implementation recommendations regarding their generic skill area.

In the second stage the Subcommittee was reconstituted with representatives from each of the five focus groups, the General Education Task Force as well as Access and Student Services. The Subcommittee focused primarily on

1. consolidating any similar recommendations from the five focus groups

2. examining the assessment of generic skills;

3. examining the issue of entry-level proficiency in mathematics and communications for post-secondary college programs;

4. examining the linkage among generic skill programs at both the preparatory and post-secondary levels, as well as referral to preparatory programs and remedial services; and

5. developing an approach to implementing and reviewing a coherent generic skills program at the college.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE FINAL REPORT

The Generic Skills Subcommittee has addressed the many issues and topics regarding generic skills in considerable depth and breadth, and the Subcommittee's Final Report has been published as a separate document. The Task Force strongly recommends that all members of the College community read the Subcommittee's Final Report, particularly given the pervasive effect that increased attention on generic skills will have on all College programs and staff involved with those programs.

The following overview highlights the main content areas of the document in order to provide a context for the comments made by the General Education Task Force.

The Generic Skills Subcommittee Final Report is comprised of six main sections:

1. A preface in which the Subcommittee identifies and addresses the the important issues
   a) who determined five areas of generic skills and why;
   b) the implications of outcomes-based education for generic skills;
   c) the purpose of generic skills education;
   d) generic skills and equity;
   e) what constitutes post-secondary levels; and
   f) the hurry to develop and implement generic skills education.

2. A philosophy statement that identifies aims and principles concerning generic skills education at the College.

3. Broad implementation recommendations including recommendations to establish a Generic Skills Committee at the College; to use the College's program review process as vehicle to implement generic skills; and to institute common math and communications assessment across the College's post-secondary programs.

4. Curriculum and pedagogy recommendations that were common to all five focus groups.

5. Broad outcomes as well as curriculum and pedagogy recommendations for each specific generic skill area.

6. A series of questions and concerns identified by the Subcommittee for the College's Generic Skills Committee to address when constituted.

3. COMMENTS OF THE TASK FORCE ON THE SUBCOMMITTEE'S REPORT

The Generic Skills Subcommittee was constituted later than the other subcommittees. In addition, much of the initial work was being carried out by five relatively independent focus groups with the Subcommittee Chair serving as liaison among them and the Task Force. As a result, the Subcommittee had been operating at a more arm's length distance from the Task Force. In order to respect the integrity of this structure and process the Task Force decided that its function would be to comment on, rather than approve or modify, the final Generic Skills Report.

The commentary of the Task Force took place in two phases. In the first phase, the Chair of the Generic Skills Subcommittee met with the two Task Force co-chairs and the Vice-President Academic in order to review and make proposals specifically on operationalizing the "Broad Implementation Recommendations". In the second phase these proposals were presented along with the Final Report to the General Education Task Force for discussion and for additional comments.

3.1 Task Force Proposals Concerning "Broad Implementation Recommendations" of the Generic Skills Subcommittee

Overall, the Task Force supports the following proposals regarding the Report's "Broad Implementation Recommendations".

3.1.1 GBC Generic Skills Committee

Recommendation #1: "the College should set up a permanent George Brown College Generic Skills Committee. That Committee would report directly to the Vice President Academic and advise the Programs Approval Committee. Its task should include

- *continuing the initiative of the Generic Skills Subcommittee;*
- *liaising with CSAC as it establishes system-wide generic skills;*
- *assisting in the implementation of generic skills standards across the college;*
- *coordinating various implementation methods;*
- *ensuring basic standards are met;*
- *advising the Programs Approval Committee;*
- *providing consultation for Quality Scan; and*
- *reporting on generic skills issues to the Vice-President Academic.*

Regarding Recommendation #1 of the Generic Skills Subcommittee, the Task Force supports the operational proposals that

i) the College ensure the Committee be small;

ii) the task of "coordinating various implemenation methods" be reassigned as an administrative function to the appropriate administrative positions or bodies in the college rather than be one of the Committee's tasks; and

iii) for practical purposes, the Committee be an advisory body to the Council of Deans rather than to the Programs Approval Committee.

3.1.2 Release Time for Committee Members

Regarding *Recommendation #2: "the College should provide adequate release time and administrative support to the Generic Skills Committee,"* the Task Force supports the operational proposal that, given the College

will now be working with two sixteen week semesters, some release time could be made available by making use of the four weeks beyond the thirty two teaching weeks for those programs to which this applied.

In addition, the Task Force recommends that

i) the College take into consideration that some teachers (e.g., non-post-secondary programs teaching eighteen weeks) would not be able to make use of this; and
ii) management and union meet to discuss and comprehensively address the issue of recognition and compensation regarding the implementation of a generic skills program in the College.

3.1.3 Generic Skills Coordinators

Also regarding *Recommendation #2*, *"the College should provide adequate release time and administrative support to the Generic Skills Committee,"* the Task Force strongly supports the proposal that there be release time for a half-time generic skills coordinator who would chair the Generic Skills Committee, and this be funded through the General Education portion of the College's Academic Plan budget.

In addition the Task Force recommends that the above half-time coordinator be supplemented with a second half-time generic skills coordinator who would co-chair the Generic Skills Committee, and that this position be funded through the Access and Student Services portion of the College's Academic Plan budget.

3.1.4 Implementing Generic Skills Through Program Review

Regarding *Recommendation #3:* *"Quality Scan working with the Programs Approval Committee should be a vehicle for programs to review and develop their generic skills content and delivery mechanisms,"* the Task Force supports the operational proposal that the two co-chairs of the Generic Skills Subcommittee meet with the chair of the Program Evaluation and Review Committee.

3.1.5 Common Entry Assessment for Communications and Math

Regarding *Recommendation #4:* *"the College should adopt a common entry assessment mechanism for both English and Mathematics. Base college functioning levels geared to those mechanisms should be used to indicate whether or not students will be at risk. This indicator should not be used to exclude students from post-secondary programs but rather to determine who will be referred to one or more of a number of remediation mechanisms,"* the Task Force supports the operational proposal that the two co-chairs of the Generic Skills Committee meet with the Director of Student Services.

3.1.6 Process for Adopting Generic Skills Descriptions and Implementation Recommendations

Regarding *Recommendation #5:* *"the College should adopt the generic skills descriptions and implementation recommendations [made in the Generic Skills Subcommittee's Final Report]"*, the Task Force supports the operational proposal that the Final Report be sent to the Council of Deans after it has been discussed and commented upon by the General Education Task Force.

3.2 Additional Comments and Proposals

In addition to its responses to the operational proposals accompanying the "Broad Implementation Recommendations" of the Final Report, the Task Force also makes the following comments and proposals:

3.2.1 Generic Skills in the College

The Task Force is concerned that the College generally is not very aware of the scope of Ministry and College initiatives regarding generic skills, or the implications of increased attention to generic skills for post-secondary programs.

The Task Force recommends that the first three priorities of the Generic Skills Coordinators be

i) developing strategies for raising awareness about CSAC and GBC proposals regarding generic skills in the College;

ii) developing a tool that utilizes the descriptions provided by the focus groups to assist programs to identify what generic skills taught are being taught in their courses, where, how, and if possible, at what level; and,

iii) setting up a professional development program to assist faculty with developing generic skills in their courses.

3.2.2 College Course Outlines

The Task Force noted the importance of giving attention to generic skills development in all courses and recommends that the College's new course outline format be revised so as to have faculty explicitly state the generic skills component of their courses in the course objectives, evaluation method and content.

3.3.3 Scope of Generic Skills Development

The Task Force is concerned that in taking on the many changes and initiatives that Ontario colleges are addressing simultaneously, the college system, and George Brown College, has underestimated the scope of the task of developing a comprehensive, effective and coordinated generic skills program. As such, the Task Force recommends that the nature and scope of this initiative be brought to the attention of key College bodies.

VI. CONCLUSION

General education has been a contentious issue within Ontario's colleges since their inception. It has been the experience of the Task Force that when predispositions are set aside, general education provides an opportunity for all sectors of the College to better understand our endeavours as college educators, whether we are involved in vocational, generic or general education, and to renew a more commonly-shared commitment to college education.

Rather than simply be a point of divisiveness, implementing general education and generic skills challenges a College and its various departments to collaboratively re-examine the very nature and purpose of education. It is a challenge which needs to be responded to in good faith and with a respect for the different ideals that have brought us to college education. This has been the most important finding of the General Education Task Force.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

Working Principles of the General Education Task Force

The General Education Task Force was guided by a commitment to the following working principles in its reserch, deliberations and development of recommendations.

1. developing a general education curriculum that benefits the college and its members as a whole rather than any particular sector;

2. developing a general education curriculum that is informed by the educational discussion, theory and research on general education;

3. formulating, collaboratively, a general education and generic skills curriculum;

4. maintaining the integrity of programs and of general education;

5. advocating that the educational, social and economic opportunities afforded by a general education component be available to all college students, including those in non-post-secondary programs;

6. making use of the distinctive strengths of the college community in developing and delivering a general education curriculum, including

    a) the colleges' longstanding emphasis on teaching and attentiveness to student needs and interests,
    b) a respect for the traditions and general contributions of our professions and trades,
    c) involving those who are interested and who have, or seek to expand, their general education background in the promotion or delivery of general education;

7. minimizing job disruption and preventing job loss while incorporating the increased emphasis on general education and generic skills within college programs; and

8. maximizing the opportunities offered by this curriculum change for faculty growth and program review.

APPENDIX B
CONSULTATION SESSIONS ON IMPLEMENTING OF GENERAL EDUCATION

December 8, 1993	Registrar
December 16, 1993	Program Approval Committee
January 5, 1994	Co-ordinators and Faculty member of Furniture Production and Repair Department
January 5, 1994	Staff Training and Development
January 19, 1994	Council of Deans
January 21, 1994	Dean of Hospitality
February 9, 1994	OPSEU Local 556, Chief Steward
February 9, 1994	Chair of Graphic Arts and Co-ordinators
February 15, 1994	Chair of Graphic Arts and Staff Members
February 25, 1994	Dean and Chair of Community Services
March 2, 1994	Dean and Chairs of Health Sciences

APPENDIX C
CONFERENCES ATTENDED ON BEHALF OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE

May 24, 1993	Conference on Teaching Excellence, NISOD, Austin, Texas, Attended by Ed Ksenych
June 14-18, 1993	Assessment as Learning Workshop, Alverno College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, attended by Marianne Taylor
June 14-18, 1993	A New Look at the Disciplines Workshop, Alverno Colege, Milwaukeee, Wisconsin, attended by Peter Lovrick
October 18-19, 1993	Caring, Critical Thinking and Praxis; Imperatives for Nursing Curriculum, Humber College, Etobicoke, Ontario, attended by Marianne Taylor
October 28, 1993	Presentation on Outcomes and General Education to General Education Task Force by Clive Cockerton (General Education Co-ordinator Humber College) and William Hauna. (Human Studies Department Chair, Humber College)

APPENDIX D
PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION SESSIONS REGARDING THE WORK OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE
May 1993 - March 1994

WITHIN GBC

May 19, 1993	Presentation to the Department of English and Liberal Studies, St. James
May 31, June 2, 7 & 8, 1993	Town Hall Discussion Sessions at St. James and Casa Loma Campuses
June 14, 1993	Presentation to GBC Board of Governors Academic & Student Affairs Subcommittee
June 15, 1993	Presentation to GBC Graphic Arts Department
June 22, 1993	Presentation to GBC Board of Governors
August 16, 1993	Presentation to GBC Council of Deans' Retreat, Niagara-on-the-Lake
August 31, 1993	Presentation to GBC Community Services Division
December 2, 1993	Presentation to Council of Deans
December 14, 1993	Presentation to GBC School of Science and Technology Dean & Chairs
January 25, 1994	Presentation to GBC Program Issues Committee of College Council
February 22, 1994	Presentation to Liberal Arts and Science and Mathematics and Communication, St. James
March 3, 1994	Presentation to English and Liberal Studies Department, Casa Loma Campus

March 8, 1994	Presentation to Dental Assistant Department, Casa Loma Campus

OUTSIDE OF GBC

May 24, 1993	Presentation by Ed Ksenych at Conference on Teaching Excellence, NISOD, Austin, Texas
July 21, 1993	Discussion Session with Faculty from Mohawk College, Hamilton
August 19, 1993	Presentation to the Faculty of Georgian College, Barrie
December 1, 1993	Presentation to CSAC General Education Council
January 24, 1994	Presentation to General Education & Generic Skills Advisory Panel, Centennial College, Toronto
January 24, 1994	Discussion Session with General Education Co-ordinator, Cambrian College

APPENDIX E:

GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE INTERIM REPORT

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the General Education Task Force's recommendations are generally interconnected, we have identified the following five areas as priorities:

1. The College's adoption of the "Recommended Philosophy Statement" (pages 32-3) along with its related recommendations regarding the inclusion of "balanced education" in the College's Mission Statement (Implementation Recommendation # 23, page 53) and a statement concerning the nature and purpose of general education in the 1994-95 calendar (Implementation Recommendation # 8, page 47).

2. The establishment of a General Education Department to manage the development and delivery of general education across the college (Implementation Recommendation #10, pages 48-9) as well as whatever other organizational structures and/or committees are necessary to develop curriculum for September, 1994 and afterwards (e.g., General Education Course Development Committee (page, 39 and 49); General Education Review Committee, pages 39-40).

3. The set of recommendations regarding the development of a multifaceted approach to remediation in the generic skills areas at both the post-secondary and non-post-secondary levels (Implementation Recommendation # 6, pages 46-47). The specific recommendations concerning the development of entry and exit levels of proficiency and methods of assessment should be undertaken by the Generic Skills Subcommittee.

4. The set of recommendations regarding Human Resource Development (Implementation Recommendations #14, #15 and #16, pages 50-51).

5. The set of recommendations regarding the utilization of the College's Program Review and Revision Process to implement CSAC requirements and College guidelines concerning general education and generic skills (Implementation Recommendations #2, #3 and #4, pages 44-45).

As a concluding remark, we wish to underscore the importance of having the Council of Deans, Chairs and Vice-President Academic meet collectively to work out a coherent strategy for implementing the above recommendations (Implementation Recommendation #25, page 53).

AS APPROVED BY THE GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE
SEPTEMBER 16, 1993.

APPENDIX F:

GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

February 15, 1994

MANDATE

The mandate of the General Education Course Development Committee is to promote, help develop and review general education curriculum in accordance with the guidelines and recommendations of CSAC and our college's General Education Task Force, and to make initial recommendations regarding general education course approval to the Programs Approval Committee (PAC).

Specifically, the committee will

a) research and develop the foundations course; establish standards of student performance in the foundations course; and ensure the foundations course is current;

b) assist faculty in researching and developing general education courses;

c) review proposed and existing courses in terms of the guidelines established by the General Education Council as operationalized in the college's General Education Task Force;

d) develop criteria for and advise on the exemption of programs from the required general education foundations course;

e) further refine the general education outcomes and guidelines for course development proposed in the General Education Task Force report;

f) serve as a resource to programs regarding their general education curriculum;

g) recommend, and serve as a resource for, professional development activities regarding general education;

h) assist in the development of a practical method of introducing new general education courses into the college; and

i) encourage the development of general education in the college.

GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

February 15, 1994

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP

a) Included in the membership of the Committee will be:

- Representatives of the three broad general education content areas
  -Humanities
  -Science and Technologies
  -Social Science
- Representative from each post-secondary Faculty (Division)
- Faculty member who has been involved in developing and delivering the college's foundation liberal studies course; to be succeeded by a faculty member currently involved in delivering a foundations course
- an ESL specialist
- an Educational Resource representative and/or Learning Resources representative, as required
- a post-secondary student
- Chair of the General Education Department or designate

b) The Chair of the Committee will initially be a person who has served on the General Education Task Force. Ensuing Chairs shall be elected by the Committee and shall have served for a least one term as a member of the Committee

c) In addition to participating in the discussion and decision-making activities of the committee meetings, members will be expected to do backgound reading and research and to be prepared to undertake subcommittee work.

d) Resource persons will be invited to participate in the Committee meetings, as needed.

e) It is expected that the participation of members will be recognized. Specifically, it is expected that

1) support staff representatives shall be freed from their responsibilities to attend meetings without penalty;

2) faculty participation shall be recognized on their SWFs;

3) administrative representatives shall be able to negotiate a meaningful reduction or accommodation to their regular workload;

4) student participation shall be recognized through the use of the Student Government Leadership course credit; and

5) representatives from the wider community shall be recognized in an appropriate, but non-financial manner.

f) Meetings of the Committee shall be open, and any interested member of the college community may attend as a guest by notifying the Committee chair at least three days before the meeting.

g) The Committee shall be guided in its work by the Working Principles recommended by the General Education Task Force.

h) The Committee shall initially meet twice a month.

i) Subcommittees will be formed at the outset on an ad hoc basis to address issues which require concentrated focus. The need to establish standing subcommittees will be addressed after the committee has been operating long enough to assess its responsibilities and workload.

j) The Committee shall initiate a formal liason with the Programs Approval Committee.

k) Initially, the Committee shall inform the General Education Implementation Coordinators of its activities; the Implementation Coordinators report directly to the Vice-President Academic. In the future, the Committee shall report to the Chair of the General Education Department and the Vice President Academic.

l) The General Education Curriculum Committee shall review its mandate, structure and operation in the form of a yearly report.